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## Tailless Whipscorpion (*Phrynus longipes*) Feeds on Antillean Crested Hummingbird (*Orthorhyncus cristatus*)

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**ABSTRACT.**—A tailless whipscorpion (*Phrynus longipes*) was observed feeding on an Antillean Crested Hummingbird (*Orthorhyncus cristatus*) atop a large

boulder on the island of Virgin Gorda in the British Virgin Islands. This is the first record of any avian species serving as prey for an amblypygid. *Received 13 June 2005, accepted 21 March 2006.*

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Whip spiders (tailless whipscorpions), or amblypygids, are members of the class Arachnida, order Amblypygi. *Phrynus longipes* is the largest amblypygid on many Caribbean islands, including the U.S. and British Virgin Islands (Lazell 2005). The average body length of *P. longipes* is ~35 mm and the an-

tenniform legs can reach an additional 34 mm (Quintero 1981). Amblypygids have no venom glands; instead, they use their sharp raptorial pedipalps (first pair of appendages) to capture prey. They are generally nocturnal and are considered mostly "sit and wait" predators, feeding on prey items found around their home territory in the caves and crevices between and under large rocks, and on trees (Weygoldt 2000). Although the diet of *P. longipes* consists primarily of arthropods, especially insects, it has been recorded to prey upon vertebrates, such as *Anolis* lizards (Weygoldt 2000) and *Eleuthrodactylus* frogs (Reagan and Waide 1996). There are no previous records of avian species serving as prey for any amblypygid.

Antillean Crested Hummingbirds (*Orthorhyncus cristatus*) are diurnal and inhabit the Lesser Antilles, including the British Virgin Islands (Lazell 2005). The main cause of mortality for hummingbirds is predation of their eggs and nestlings; predation on adult hummingbirds is relatively rare (Miller and Glass 1985). Thirteen cases of adult hummingbird predation have been documented worldwide, with only two events involving an invertebrate predator; the Chinese praying mantis (*Tenodera aridifolia*) was the predator in both cases (Miller and Glass 1985). Like amblypygids, the Chinese praying mantis is a "sit and wait" predator.

At 22:00 EST on 20 October 2004, J. Egelhoff observed an adult *P. longipes* (body ~30 mm long) feeding on an adult Antillean Crested Hummingbird (~80 mm long), 1 m above ground, atop a large boulder behind the Little Secrets Nature Gallery in Spanish Town, Virgin Gorda, British Virgin Islands (18° 26.68'

N, 64° 26.38' W). The *P. longipes* was holding the hummingbird with its raptorial pedipalps and was feeding on the hummingbird's body; it continued to feed for 2 hr. At the time of observation, the hummingbird was no longer alive, and due to the mutilation caused by the feeding amblypygid, we were unable to obtain information on the hummingbird's weight, sex, or breeding status. The amblypygid is now part of the living exhibit at the Little Secrets Nature Gallery.

Although it is unknown how the *P. longipes* acquired its avian prey, our observation is the first record of an amblypygid feeding on a hummingbird, or any other avian species.

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